

GREGG. (R.R.)

The Cause of Consumption

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# THE CAUSE OF CONSUMPTION,

A LOSS OF ALBUMEN FROM THE BLOOD  
THROUGH IRRITATED AND ABRADED  
MUCOUS MEMBRANES.

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Having finally secured the last link required, in the long chain of negative, as well as of positive, proof, to clear up the mystery which has so long hung over the cause and nature of Tubercle, I am now prepared to re-affirm, even more positively than ever before, that the *Cause of Consumption is a loss of Albumen from the Blood through irritated and abraded Mucous Membranes.*

It is a loss of Albumen from the Blood, through the Mucous Membrane of the Kidneys, that causes Bright's disease of those organs, and that takes the life of almost every sufferer from that disease, in its chronic form.

If such, then, is the cause, and such the fatality, of Bright's disease, which are well-known facts, it would seem that a similar, but more profuse, waste of Albumen, through those still more vital organs, the Lungs, must be equally serious in all its stages, and equally fatal in its results, if proper measures are not speedily taken to stop such waste before fatal conditions have arisen.

The Expectoration of consumptives, and all their other catarrhal, or mucous discharges, from whatever organ, are mostly Albumen, and a direct loss of so much of this constituent from the blood.

And it is the waste, in this manner, of a portion of this most indispensable element of animal life, that causes consumption and its many attendant phenomena—its tubercles, its night sweats, its dropsies, its great emaciation, its fatty livers, its adhesions of the pleura, etc., etc.

The Albumen of the blood is similar to the white of the egg, in its natural state, and furnishes almost the only



nutrition for the whole muscular system, hence the great emaciation so characteristic of consumption, as one prominent result of its loss; the muscles being robbed of a large portion of their only food by its profuse waste.

The loss of any portion of it, furthermore, throws all the constituents of the blood into a *disproportion*; in other words, destroys that proper proportion among them all, which Nature is at the greatest pains to create, and which is so necessary to health to have maintained; and leaves a relative excess in the circulation of all those remaining, which was not designed, and against the evil effects of which the system cannot fully protect itself while the waste is permitted to go on.

The loss of one ounce of Albumen, for instance, destroys nearly one pound of blood for all purposes of healthy nutrition; and leaves a relative excess in the blood vessels of

Water, . . . . .	5 $\frac{3}{4}$ Ounces.
Blood Corpuscles, . . . . .	7 “
Fatty Matters, . . . . .	9 Grains.
Fibrin, . . . . .	15 “
Salts, . . . . .	41 “

The excess thereby left of these constituents is then the same as Foreign Matter in the blood, and is found depositing in living tissues, creating diseases that correspond to the element thus disposed of, and the part in which deposited, or it is expelled from the system entire through every outlet that Nature can command.

The excess of Water causes the blood to be too watery during the whole course of the disease, from the commencement of the waste of Albumen through till the case closes in death; and it is this too watery condition of the blood which in turn causes “night sweats”; that is, Nature is *compelled* to establish them, for the purpose of throwing off a greater or less portion of the excess of water, and thus do what it can in this way to save the patient as long as may be from more immediately fatal results. Were this not done in this or other ways, the blood would soon become so

very watery under the constantly accumulating excess of water—as sometimes is the case in Bright's disease—that all the blood corpuscles would speedily be destroyed, and most of the soft tissues of the whole body be washed to death. Dropsy, which usually comes in later, is still another, and the last conservative effort in this direction, in the interests of life, as it, too, is a means of expelling a portion of the excess of water from the blood vessels into the surrounding tissues, and thus aids a little time longer in avoiding worse immediate consequences.

The Blood Corpuscles, left in excess, are *decolorized* by circulating in the still too watery blood, or serum, notwithstanding the night sweats and dropsy throw off a large portion of the excess of water, and are then deposited in the capillaries or smallest blood vessels, where they shrivel, to become the so-called tuberculous corpuscles, which are organized into Tubercles, and which have *no other origin but this*.

The excess of Fatty Matters causes the fatty livers so common in consumption, and other so-called fatty degenerations, fatty tumors and the like.

The excess of Fibrin causes those adhesions of the pleura, that is, of the surface of the lungs to the inner surface of the ribs, to the heart, or to each other, which M. Louis says are almost without exception in consumption; and which are often among the most serious of all its complications. And, finally—

The excess of the Salts causes most forms of calculi, enlargements of the joints and bony tumors, so common in scrofulous and consumptive subjects, ossifications, and other more or less similar morbid developments.

Not a case of consumption, even in its first stage, or, indeed, in its first threatenings, can, therefore, be cured, nor can a rational hope of its cure be entertained, short of *healing the Mucous Membranes*, and putting a stop to the further waste of Albumen. And that all this can be done by judicious treatment, in the great majority of cases, in the first stage of the disease—that is, in all cases in that stage, except-



ing those who have inherited the most feeble constitutions—there can fortunately be little ground for question. There is, in fact, one of the most hope-inspiring provisions to be found in all Nature, bearing directly upon this very point, which shows conclusively that this can be accomplished, but space will not allow of its being explained here. It should be said, however, that all harsh medicines must be scrupulously avoided, as they increase instead of allay irritations, and thereby often cause a more rapid waste of Albumen than the disease itself does when let alone.

No one can maintain vigorous health for a day, while sustaining a loss of this most essential of all the elements of animal life, and none can live under its continued waste. This fact applies to all the Mucous Membranes. Consumption of the Lungs may and does arise, or is often started, by the waste of Albumen through the Mucous Membrane of any of the other organs possessing it. For instance, large numbers of confirmed dyspeptics ultimately die of consumption, as do many of those suffering from chronic diarrhœa, chronic dysentery and the like. And the same is true, in a marked degree, of ladies suffering from chronic leucorrhœa. In all these cases Albumen is lost from the blood the same as through the kidneys or lungs; and the blood-corpuscles left in excess are decolorized the same and deposited in the lungs, in many such cases, to commence the growth of tubercles. This explains why tubercles are quite often begun in the lungs, exciting a *dry* cough, before there has been any expectoration therefrom to account for them in that way.

These views, or discoveries, it is now my purpose to carry into general practice as rapidly as circumstances will allow; and I ask that fair and candid consideration of them which the great importance of the subject demands.

Respectfully,

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